

KARL DECKER TELLS JUST HOW HE RES

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Srta. Evangelina Cosío y Cisneros presa en la cárcel de Mujeres y fugada recientemente.—De fotografía.
Senorita Evangelina Cosío y Cisneros as she appeared in the woman's prison (La Recojidas), and who recently escaped.—From a photograph.



Comoda y objetos ocupados en la casa O'Farrell num. 1.—De fotografía.
Cabinet and other objects used in the house at No. 1 O'Farrell street.—From a photograph.



EVASION DE UNA PRESA.

(Escape of the Female Prisoner.)

Escalera, tabla y soga usadas para la fuga.—de fotografía.
(Ladder, Board and Rope Used in the Flight.)—From a photograph.

NOW that Miss Cisneros and all concerned are safely on American soil and beyond reach of General Weyler's vindictive grasp, I may safely tell the full facts in regard to the rescue by the Journal. In my previously cabled accounts and while we were still under Spanish eyes it was manifestly impossible to narrate many important facts, incidents and details which may now, for the first time, be told without danger.

To begin at the beginning:

One morning late in August I was ordered to drop my work at the Journal's Washington Bureau and come on to New York at once. That evening I reported for duty to the managing editor of the Journal in the home office here.

The managing editor promptly announced that the Journal was preparing to undertake, single-handed, what the allied interests of humanity in Europe and America seemed hopeless of accomplishing—the release of Evangelina Cisneros from a Cuban prison. For weeks the Journal had been fighting for her liberty with all the weapons at the command of a modern newspaper. The entire country had been aroused. The women of every State in the Union had aligned themselves with the Journal in its effort to secure the release of Miss Cisneros; and the Pope himself had personally interceded with the Queen Regent of Spain. These efforts had been of no avail.

"We have promised the women of this country and England that this girl shall be freed by the Journal's efforts," said the managing editor, summing up the situation. "So far we have been unsuccessful. We must now resort to other means." Turning to me, he said: "I want you to go to Havana, get this girl out of the Recojidas and send her to the United States."

It was not a matter to ponder over. I was fairly familiar with the city of Havana, and the obstacles in the way, and I cheerfully replied:

"If you will give me my own time to work in and leave me absolutely unhampered until I succeed or cry quits, I will bring Miss Cisneros back with me."

"You shall be entirely free to use your own discretion as to time and method. And, furthermore, I can assure you of Mr. Hearst's ample appreciation of your efforts if you succeed."

Four days later I landed in Havana. Within a week I had summoned to me two men of tried courage, resourceful, sagacious, daring men of just the calibre needed for such an enterprise, and perfectly familiar with the Spanish language.

From the 25th of August, when I reached Cuba, until the middle of September, we worked unceasingly, without making any progress. Then developments blossomed into being with promising rapidity. Plans were formed and rejected when found impracticable, and finally as the sum of all our trials we secured a knowledge of the situation that made our final efforts successful. At last we estab-

lished communication with Miss Cisneros, and received from her a note giving valuable suggestions as to the means to be used in liberating her, and inclosing a plan of the jail. We went to work at once along the lines suggested, leased the house at No. 1 O'Farrell street, and on the night of Tuesday, October 5, entered the house secretly at 11 o'clock, and three hours later made our first attempt to cut the bars of the window to which Miss Cisneros had access. As has been told, the attempt was a failure, and we were forced to retire that night.

The next night we again made the attempt, and succeeded. The events of this night are of greatest interest, as it was on this evening we finally liberated Miss Cisneros.

It was nearly 8 o'clock when Hernandez and I reached the little house in Callejon O'Farrell. Mallory had preceded us and had lighted up the entire establishment. The barred window opening on the court in front of the jail was open, and in this Mallory could be seen by the inquisitive neighbors, bustling busily about, placing our scant store of furniture so as to cause it to make the finest possible show. We made no attempt at concealment this night, but moved around openly and like men desirous of happy relations with their neighbors. Hernandez even indulged in a short chat with Don Jose, the alcalde of the jail, and proposed to a joint debauch, to which the jailer was to be invited, having for purpose the intoxication of that worthy. This proposition was rejected by Mallory and myself as undignified, and certainly not essential to the success of our plot.

The three little alleys running around the jail were alive with creatures who later in the evening gave the impression of suffering severely from insomnia. Three large dump carts were thrown on their haunches in the alley in front of the Recojidas, and on and about these sat a number of Spaniards, negroes and Chinese, who discussed volubly and with many whole-arm gestures the stirring topics of the day, the recall of Weyler, the demonstration in the Plaza de Armas, and the possible war with the United States.

From a house to the rear of ours came the hacking, torturing coughing of a consumptive already well enfolded in the arms of death, while from within the jail wallled out upon the sultry air the querulous crying of the baby of Don Jose.

The night was still, hot and oppressive. Early in the evening a bank of heavy clouds gave promise of rain, but we were disappointed in our hopes, for by 9 o'clock the sky had cleared and the great, round, white moon rode through the heavens in stately solitude, the black-blue of the dome above us unbecked by clouds. We sat and stood for some little while in front of the house, carefully watching for any sign that our work of the night before had been discovered. Hernandez and Mallory both entered into conversation with each of the neighbors as were just about us, but there was no evidence that any alarm had been given through our attempt of the previous night. Finally we went into the house, dragged our table to the window, and placing on it several candles, opened up a poker game.

The scene in O'Farrell street as seen by some chance passer by at that moment, might be staged by a master of realism without a single change. The foul street in front of the jail with its chattering denizens, half clad, cursing the heat, lighted in yellow patches by the bright glare of a street lamp bracketed to the side of a house at the corner of the jail opposite our house; the oblong window with its iron bars and three listless, perspiring Americans seen just within, gambling for matches as a foil for ennui, formed a stage picture which could have received no touch to make it more dramatic had Gillette himself set the scene.

The dramatic possibilities, however, were not noticed by those actually taking part in the performance.

The strain at this time was terrific, but there was a tonic in the very danger itself that was as bracing as absinthe.

Several boxes of matches were emptied on the table, and for a time we gambled fiercely for these little bits of wax.

We had a bottle of gin and a large portion of water to refresh us when the heat became unbearable and the thirst baked our throats. The gin would cut a new street through Harlem, while the water was warm and unpalatable. A big bunch of brevas burned steadily during the evening, and the smoke, filling the room, overflowed and wafted out into the moonlight in thin, white wisps.

Two orders of publicans, lounging along the alley, looked in upon us from the open door, their gaudy blue and red uniforms giving a bright touch of color to an otherwise sombre picture.

The laws in Havana are very strict against gambling, and we were careful to let no money be seen upon the table.

The O. P.'s stood by the door, looking curiously in for a few minutes. At last one of them, a Gallego, from the province known as the Ireland of Spain, because of the quick wit of its people, asked us what we played, and queried us to some extent as to the legality of our game. We assured him we did not play for money, but for matches.

The Gallego, however, knew the fun game.

"I would like to have a box of those," he remarked, with a smile that might have meant anything.

A moment later they lolloped off down their heels. We threw them a cheerful friendly fashion.

Time dragged, however, and the gam like water over a dam when money is at employ solely as time's executioner, lengthened. The minutes dragged by on

Toward eleven we noticed a dim light and we gave them all possible encouragement a few minutes to get a breath of fresh air ahead and all sorts of gossamer promise the benediction of that superb Cuban, from the street lamp failed to fall, lay a and toning down to a mellow picturesque and without beauty.

We closed and locked the door, barred

pare for our night's work. I have been as

prize. I don't know exactly, but my im

early part of the evening; that every pal

was too far fetched to set us choking wi

We first took off our shoes, and then, m

the roof the ladder and three-hinged board

escape. The tools to be used were laid in t

everything was in readiness for the ventu

floor to pass the hours of waiting that m

ling began. The lights were extinguished, a

stone hot, talking occasionally in whisp

Hernandez, who had not slept at all the n

while. From time to time Mallory or my

and report upon the condition of the neig

On one of these trips I noticed the

standing directly in front of the openin

driver had been ordered to move a block

of the night before, the idea being, of cou

scene of our operations in order not t

further toward the city, however, he sto

stone's throw of the house.

We swore at the driver's stupidity. I

larly profane man, but oaths fell fast th

swallowed did not take anything away fr

It was determined to have some one g

ther away, and this task was assigned m

out of the house. I found the carriage

er was anywhere in call. I searched along

ley, but he had disappeared. Hernandez

he could not be found, and it was learn

and had left the carriage for our use, w

other part of the city after the night's w

At 1:30 o'clock we were all silent in th

done a lot of talking earlier in the eveni

hour we had made conversation, like fol

was too dreadful to sit still and say nothi

but at 1:30 o'clock we found ourselves al

the eyes of another man. There was no

uppermost thought in his fellow's mind

"Suppose they have discovered our last

Crk-k-k-k!

Hernandez was testing the cylinder of

ery of the sentinels at the forts. Mallory

sponse. If it came to the worst, the pist

still without speaking, we moved out

"Damn the moon!"

It is hard to say which of us said that

The moon was still high in the heav

with the clearness of a calcium light dir

window through which the girl was to e

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